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STEPHANIE KUSIE, M.P.
CALGARY MIDNAPORE

15 April 2020

The Honourable Ahmed Hussen
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
140 Promenade du Portage
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0J9

Dear Minister Hussen,

I wish to bring to your attention that many Canadian families are still experiencing challenges due to COVID-19, despite the supports announced by the government.

Many Canadian families will or have already received vital financial assistance through the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and an increase to the Canada Child Benefit (CCB). Although these supports have provided some relief, they may not be enough, especially for larger families.

The CERB provides a individual with a flat \$2,000 a month for lost wages. This poses a problem for families that may be struggling to support multiple children after one or both parents lost their jobs due to the pandemic. For these individuals who are unemployed right now, the CERB and increased CCB payments may still be insufficient to support the basic, day-to-day needs of their families.

Canadian families are also facing other practical difficulties, even for seemingly simple things like purchasing essential goods. Many grocery stores have implemented restrictions on purchasing multiple quantities of the same item. Grocery stores implemented policies that are perhaps appropriate for a household of one or two people, but pose hardships for larger families. While two dozen eggs may last multiple weeks for two people, it may only provide a few days' worth of breakfasts for families with several children. This means that larger families are unable to purchase sufficient quantities of food, or are forced to make several trips to the grocery store, against the advice of health authorities.

Additionally, many Canadian foster families are continuing to struggle as they don't receive the Canada Child Benefit but rather the Children's Special Allowances (CSA) federal benefit. The CSA is a very similar support to the Canada Child Benefit, and is in fact equal in amount to the CCB combined with the Children's Disability Benefit. Yet the CSA has not

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received an increase like the CCB, leaving foster parents without additional financial support at this crucial time.

Therefore, I would like to know what plans the government has to further support Canadian families during this time and if the government has considered providing additional support for children in foster families, similar to the increased support that was made to the Canada Child Benefit.

I look forward to your response to these questions, and hope to be included in future updates on these issues.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Kusie, MP

Shadow Minister for Families, Children and Social Development